

Planning Commission Staff Report

May 25, 2011
Item 5.a.

SUBJECT: PCUP-295

APPLICANT: A Hand 'n Hand Career Training Center/ Sharon Van Brunt

PROPERTY OWNER: Cranbrook Group, Inc.

PURPOSE: Application for a Conditional Use Permit to operate a Career Training Center within an existing building.

GENERAL PLAN: Business Park (Industrial/Commercial and Office)/ Mixed Use

ZONING: PUD-I/C-O (Planned Unit Development –Industrial/Commercial-Office) District

LOCATION: 5980 Stoneridge Drive, Suites 110 and 112

ATTACHMENTS: Exhibit A, Draft Conditions of Approval
Exhibit B, Project Narrative, Site plans, and Floor Plan dated
“Received, April 11, 2011”
Exhibit C, Location Map
Exhibit D, Noticing Map

BACKGROUND

A Hand 'n Hand Career Training Center (AHH) is a nonprofit training center with a mission to provide training to individuals that are unemployed or underemployed. The vocational career training for adults (ages 18 years and older) would focus on careers in retail sales, credit management, eCommerce, customer service, computer training, internet technology, and self-reliance entrepreneurial trades.

The proposed training center would be located at the Crossroads Center in Hacienda Business Park (HBP). The zoning for the subject location is PUD-I/C-O (Planned Unit Development – Industrial/Commercial-Office) district. Under the specific ordinance governing Hacienda Business Park, the site is subject to the uses of the Retail/Commercial and Financial Planning District (CPD), which requires a use permit for public and private schools (such as a trade school with more than 20 students in the facility at one time). The proposed training would have a maximum of 45 students at

one time. Therefore, the applicants have applied for a Conditional Use Permit. Conditional Use Permits require review and action by the Planning Commission.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Crossroads Center is located on an approximately 13-acre site on the east side of Hopyard Road, between Inglewood Drive and Stoneridge Drive. Properties adjacent to the shopping center include the Gateway Square Shopping Center to the north, across Stoneridge Drive; an office complex to the south, across Inglewood Drive; Summerfield Suites Hotel and Extended Stay Deluxe Hotel are both located to the east, across Chabot Drive; and the Val Vista residential neighborhood to the west, across Hopyard Road.

Access to and from the site is via six (6) driveways, with two driveways off Chabot Drive that have direct connections to the proposed suites.

The retail/office center contains six buildings totaling 125,682 square feet. Existing businesses in the center include Wells Fargo, Sweet Tomatoes, Starbucks, and a variety of other commercial, personal service, and office uses. The applicant's proposed business would be located in Building A (please see Figure 1.1 or the site plan in Exhibit B), an office building on the corner of Stoneridge Drive (north) and Chabot Drive (east).

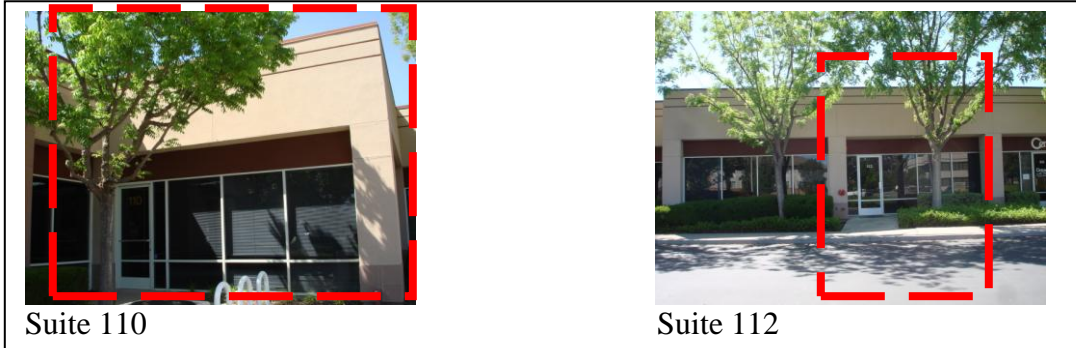
The current tenants of the building are Physio Therapy Associates, Metro List Services, Open VPN Tech., Edward Jones, Adrian Palma, Century 21/Tower Realty, Chan Assoc., Mind Share Group, Rudolph and Sletten Inc., Reed and Assoc., Law offices of Tracy L. Wood, Marzels, and Caldwell Banker. The subject tenant spaces are 3,174 square feet in size (Suite 110) and 1,936 square feet in size (Suite 112), totaling 5,110 square feet of occupied space for the AHH operations. The subject suites are located adjacent to Century 21/Tower Realty (to the north of Suite 112), the businesses between the two subject suites are Mind Share Group (Suite 108) and Rudolph Sletten (Suite 111), and Suite 110 does not have any other adjacent tenants (exterior walls and interior hallway are the neighboring uses). The subject spaces were formerly used as offices for a construction company and a mortgage company.



Figure 1.1: Location

The tenant suites are internally accessible by a common hallway in the office building, but both suites have direct access to the exterior of the building and parking lot area (as shown in Photo 1 below).

Photo 1: Exterior Entry Doors



The interior of the building layout for Building A and Building B contains a courtyard with lush landscaping and seating areas for office occupants to enjoy the outside environment (Photo 2 below).

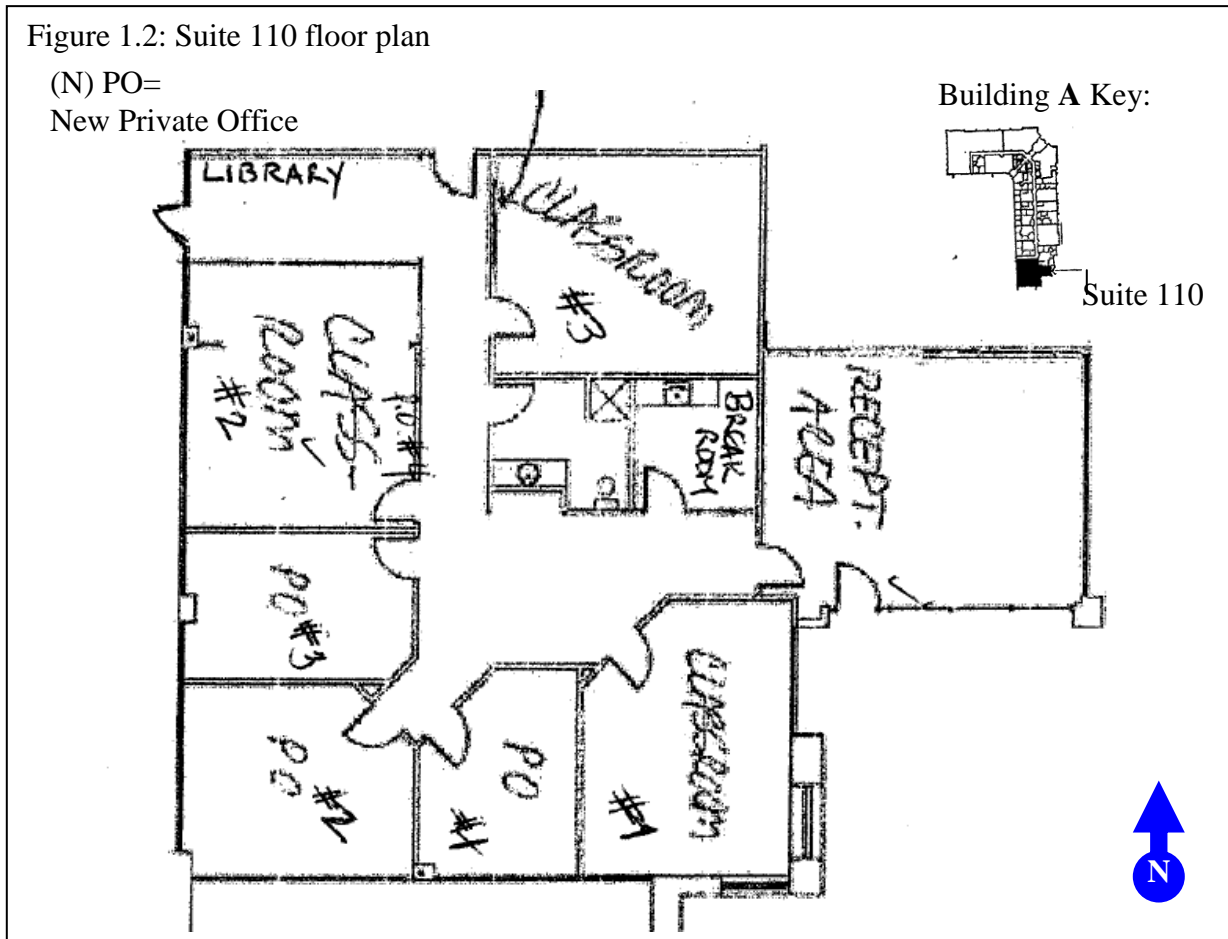
Photo 2: Existing Interior Courtyard



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant, AHH, would be operating a training facility within an approximately 3,174-square-foot tenant space (Suite 110) in the office building located at 5980 Stoneridge Drive. AHH would also occupy approximately 1,936 square feet of floor area (Suite

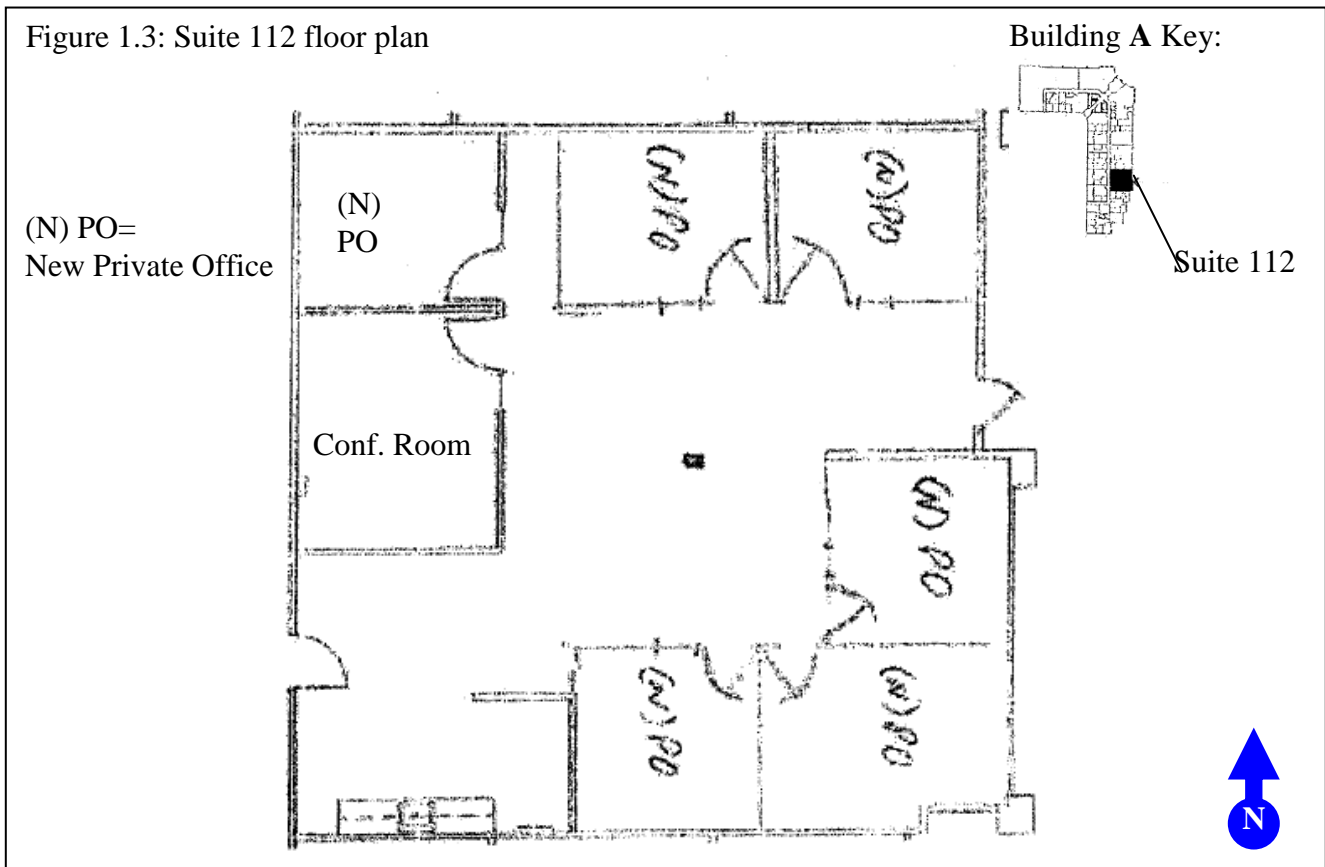
112) of the same office building for use as private offices for the administrative duties of the operation.



The classroom areas (three in total), where instruction would take place, would be located solely in Suite 110. The proposed floor plan for Suite 110 also includes a break room, reception area, three (3) private offices, one restroom, and a library area. The training programs are offered in sessions that range from 2 weeks to 7 weeks in length. The class format is indicated in Exhibit B, and includes classes Monday through Friday¹. Classes start at 9:00am and run through 6:00pm (with breaks and lunch time scheduled throughout the day), and an additional hour is offered for study hall (6:00pm to 7:00pm).

¹ Classes missed due to holiday observation would be regained with a Saturday session following the same time schedule.

The proposed floor plan for Suite 112 consists of six (6) private offices, a kitchen and break room, and conference room.



The vocational career training for adults (ages 18 years and older) is structured on a three (3) course track approach. The facility would focus on careers in retail sales, credit management, eCommerce, customer service, computer training, internet technology, and self-reliance entrepreneurial trades, but only three of the topics are offered at any one time. The facility would be operated by registration only and would not be open to the public on a drop-in basis. Each training session will have a maximum enrollment of 15 students. The organization as a whole would have a maximum of 15 staff members (administration staff and instructors combined).

Students arriving for classes would proceed to the appropriate classroom area of their session. With the exception of breaks and lunch times, all activities would be conducted inside the building. Recommended condition of approval number 8 prohibits any loitering outside the facility. Please see the attached floor plans and written narrative for additional information on the proposed use.

No public address (PA) system or amplified music would be used. Doors would remain closed (but unlocked) during class sessions to minimize any noise from being heard outside the building. Staff has included the standard noise level condition (condition number 9) in Exhibit A (see the *Noise* section of this report for more information). It is

not anticipated that the noise generated from the training activities would exceed the maximum as allowed by either the health code or noise ordinance.

The facility does not offer childcare services. Transportation to the facility is not offered, but the facility does offer free BART tickets (to those that cannot afford them) to those that are able to take public transportation. The facility also takes advantage of the existing commute assistance program offered by the HBP that provides financial assistance for alternative transportation methods such as: Wheels ECO passes, New Rider Program, transit, carpool, biking, and walking.

In addition, the facility has partnered with the Extended Suites Hotel (located directly across Chabot Drive) to offer discounted room rates for those students that are not from the area.

ANALYSIS

Conditional uses are those uses, which, by their nature, require special consideration so that they may be located properly with respect to the objectives of the Municipal Code and with respect to their effects on surrounding uses and properties. Conditional use permits may be subject to appropriate conditions to ensure that any potential adverse impacts associated with the use will be mitigated. The following is staff's analysis of the proposed career training center and its impacts, if any.

Land Use

The zoning district of the subject property conditionally permits private schools and colleges, including trade, business, music, and art schools. Staff believes that the proposed vocation training center is similar to a trade school, and, thus, falls under the use category of private schools and colleges.

One of the primary concerns in reviewing a conditional use permit application is the effect of a proposed use on surrounding uses. The proposed training center would be located in the Crossroads Center which contains primarily office and commercial uses. The proposed facility's immediate neighbors within the subject office building include Rudolph and Sletten, Inc (a construction company) and Mind Share Group (an insurance company). Staff believes that the proposed training center would fit in with and be supportive of other uses in the multi-purpose Crossroads Center and that staff and students may patronize other businesses in the center during breaks, lunch hours, and after the last class session.

The nearest residences, located in the Val Vista Neighborhood, are approximately 500 feet west of the applicant's tenant space and are separated from the subject site by other buildings in the Crossroads Center, Hopyard Road, landscaping, and a masonry soundwall along the residential subdivision. The proposed use would occur entirely indoors with the doors closed during business hours. Given these factors, staff feels that it would be unlikely that the proposed use would create adverse impacts on the adjacent residences.

Additionally, given the alternative transportation incentives, the full-day class schedule, and the nature of the professional training being offered, staff believes that the number of vehicles arriving and departing from the site would be similar to any other permitted office use.

Thus, from a land use perspective, staff believes that the proposed use is appropriate for the site and that the proposed use would be compatible with the surrounding businesses in this area.

Parking

There are a total of 606 on-site parking spaces located throughout the Crossroads Center. The overall parking ratio for the center is one parking space for every 207 square feet of floor area. Applying this parking ratio to the applicant's 5,110-square-foot total tenant space, 24 parking spaces would theoretically be allocated to the training center. However, there are no assigned parking spaces.

The Municipal Code parking standards for schools and colleges specify that one parking space should be available for each employee and one additional space for each two students 16 years of age or older. As stated in the applicant's narrative, there would be 15 staff members and a maximum of 15 students (adults) per course track and there would be three course tracks occurring on site at the same time, totaling 45 students on site at one time.

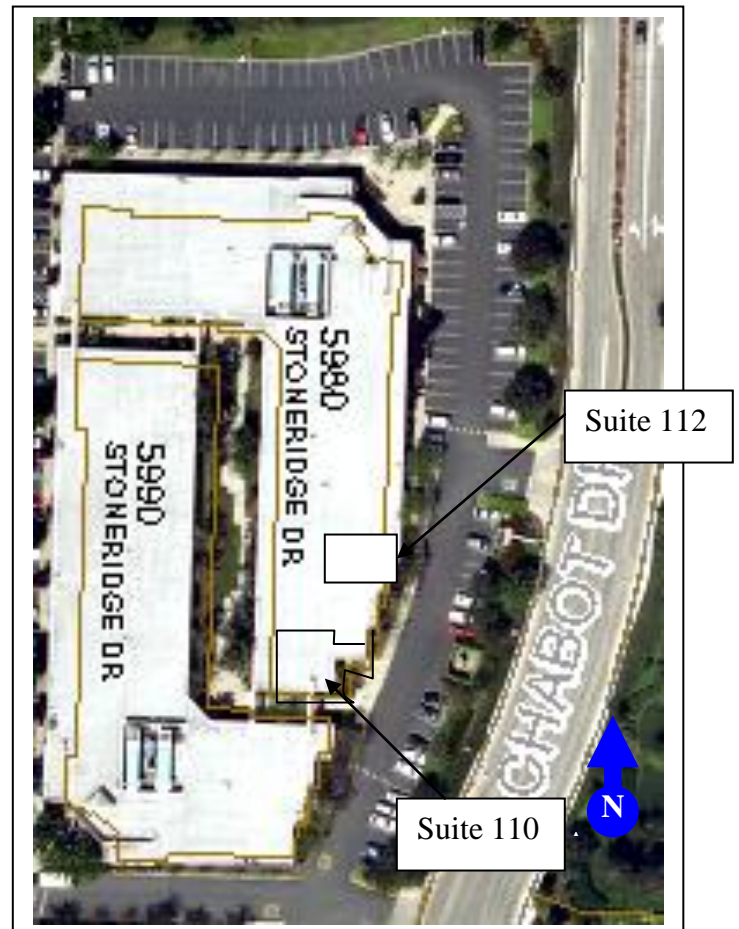


Figure 2.1: Adjacent Parking Vacancy

Using the parking ratio specified in the Municipal Code, the training center would generate a demand of 15 parking spaces for the staff members and an additional 23 parking spaces for the students, totaling a need for 38 parking spaces to serve the proposed use.

The theoretical parking allocation of 24 parking spaces is 13 parking spaces deficient in meeting the code requirements. However, staff believes that the true parking demand for the training center will be reduced by the utilization of the Hacienda Business Park (HBP) Commute Assistance Program, the free BART tickets, and the established agreement with the Extended Stay Deluxe Hotel for room rate discounts will reduce the

parking demand to at or below the 24 parking spaces that would theoretically be allocated.

Additionally, staff conducted parking counts to assess the general availability of parking at the Crossroads Center and to determine if any parking problems exist on the subject site. Staff assessed the parking availability of the most adjacent parking spaces near the subject suites (area is as shown in Figure 2.1). Staff visited the site on several occasions and at various times during the day and found that typically there were approximately 97 parking spaces available adjacent to the subject tenant suites.

Staff also reviewed prior parking count analysis data for this site and found that prior reviews determined there to be, on average, 411 parking spaces available out of the 606 spaces for the entire site.

These parking surveys indicate that there is sufficient amount of available parking spaces to serve the existing tenants and the anticipated parking demand of the proposed training center.

Noise

A proposed conditional use must be in accord with the objectives of the Zoning Ordinance. One of those objectives is to “promote the stability of existing land uses that conform with the General Plan and to protect them from inharmonious influences and objectionable intrusions.” Suite 112 will be utilized as a standard office use and would, therefore, not be noisier than the prior business in the suite or louder than the other office use tenants. Suite 110 is bordered mostly by exterior walls and an internal hallway. The single common tenant wall of Suite 110 to 111 contains the use of Classroom number 3 and the Library area. Noise generated by the proposed use of Classroom number 3 would be speaking voices only during class instruction. Thus, staff believes there will be no impacts from noise on the surrounding business.

To further mitigate sound pollution from disturbing adjacent tenants or surrounding properties, staff has included a condition requiring that the exterior doors of the facility remain closed except when being used for ingress/egress purposes and that students not loiter or make loud noises outside the building.

Staff believes that these measures would adequately address potential noise pollution from the proposed use. If concerns regarding noise arise in the future, a condition of approval allows the Director of Community Development to refer the use permit back to the Planning Commission for possible mitigation measures.

Tenant Improvements

Tenant improvements would be subject to the review and approval of the Building and Safety Division and the Fire Department. Changes to the exterior of the building would require review and approval from the Planning Division.

The Building Division and the Fire Department have reviewed the proposal. There is one bathroom facility located within the common area of the subject office building and one bathroom in Suite 110, both of which would be used by the training center's students and staff. The Building and Safety Division has reviewed the project for constancy with the Building Code and have indicated that the project meets the Building Code requirements.

The proposed tenant improvements consist of the adjustment of a wall within Classroom #2 (in Suite 110) and office improvements to Suite 112. The adjustment of the interior walls and office improvements are not a substantial change to the structure, but do require a building permit. Staff has communicated to the applicant that the tenant improvements require a building permit and the applicant has met with a staff member from the Building and Safety Division to discuss the applicable code requirements for this use.

Signage

No signage has been proposed at this time. If the applicant wishes to install signage, the proposed signage would be processed through the standard City procedures for sign design review.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notices regarding the proposed Conditional Use Permit application and related public hearing were mailed to the surrounding property owners and tenants within a 1,000-foot radius of project site. A map showing the noticing area can be found in Exhibit D. At the time this report was prepared, staff had not received any comments or concerns.

FINDINGS

The Planning Commission must make the following findings prior to granting the use permit:

- A. That the proposed location of the conditional use is in accordance with the objectives of the zoning ordinances and the purpose of the district in which the site is located.**

The objectives of the Zoning Ordinance include fostering a harmonious, convenient, workable relationship among land uses, protecting land uses from inharmonious influences and harmful intrusions, promoting a safe, effective traffic circulation system, and ensuring that public and private lands ultimately are used for the purposes which are most appropriate and beneficial to the City as a whole. As conditioned, the proposed training center would be consistent with these objectives.

The site of the subject use is located within the Hacienda Business Park's CPD (Retail/Commercial and Financial Planning District), which permits the uses of

the City's C-C (Central Commercial) and C-F (Freeway Commercial) districts. Trade schools with more than 20 students in the facility at one time are conditionally permitted uses in the C-C and C-F districts and are in accordance with the purposes of the zoning district to provide locations to offer commodities and services to the residents of Pleasanton and surrounding areas.

Use of the proposed facility is by registration only and would be conducted within the building. To ensure a harmonious and workable relationship with other tenants in the proximity, the applicant proposes to provide alternative transportation incentives and a class schedule that avoids creating additional parking and traffic demands on the site and surrounding streets. The facility staff and attendees will contribute to the revenues of the surrounding retail, restaurants, and commercial services. Additionally, the exterior doors are conditioned to remain closed during classes.

The proposed conditions of approval for the project would give the City the appropriate controls to ensure that the use does not have any negative impacts on the surrounding businesses and surrounding properties. Therefore, staff finds that the proposed location of the proposed use is in accordance with the objectives of the zoning ordinance and the purpose of the district in which the site is located.

B. That the proposed location of the conditional use and the conditions under which it would be operated or maintained will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare, or materially injurious to the properties or improvements in the vicinity.

Given the large number of parking spaces for the entire Crossroads Center, a substantial amount of vacant parking stalls within proximity to the proposed facility location, and the alternative transportation incentives, staff finds that the proposed training center would have adequate off-street parking to meet the anticipated parking demand and would not adversely impact the adjacent tenants.

The proposed activities consist of small class instruction, conducted within the tenant suites, and all doors would remain closed when classes are taking place. Therefore, staff believes that the classes would not interfere with adjacent uses. The City Police, Fire, and Building and Safety Division have no objections to the subject use as conditioned. The applicant would be required to receive all Building and Safety Division permits for the proposed tenant improvements.

The streets leading to the site are designed per City standards and are signalized to provide safe access into and out of the site. Staff feels that any areas of possible concern have been conditioned so that the proposed use would meet all applicable Municipal Code requirements and would be operated in a non-nuisance manner. Furthermore, the applicant can be required to mitigate any

future nuisances or problems. Therefore, staff finds that the proposed use would be operated in a manner that would not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare, or materially injurious to the properties or improvements in the vicinity.

C. That the proposed conditional use will comply with each of the applicable provisions of the Municipal Code which apply to Conditional Uses.

The site's zoning regulations conditionally permit the establishment of private schools and colleges. In staff's opinion, the proposed use complies with all relevant sections of the zoning ordinance.

Granting a conditional use permit to the applicant for a training center would be consistent with the City's ability to regulate zoning as listed in the Municipal Code. Staff believes that the recommended conditions of approval will help to integrate the proposed use without detrimentally affecting the surrounding properties and the City in general. As with any use permit, this use can be suspended or revoked if the conditions are not met. As conditioned, the facility would comply with all applicable provisions of the Zoning Ordinance. Therefore, staff believes this finding can be made.

CONCLUSION

Staff believes that the required use permit findings for the proposed use can be met if the project is approved with the proposed conditions of approval. Staff is of the opinion that A Hand 'n Hand Career Training Center would be complementary to the existing businesses and tenants in the Crossroads Center. Staff believes that the business is providing a beneficial service to the community and the greater area by providing a place for adults to receive career training and would not detrimentally affect the surrounding uses or properties.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

This project is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, Section 15301, Existing Facilities, Class 1. Therefore, no environmental document accompanies this report.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve PCUP-295 by taking the following actions:

1. Make the required findings as described in the staff report; and
2. Approve PCUP-295 subject to the conditions listed in Exhibit A.

Staff Planner: Rosalind Rondash, Associate Planner, (925) 931-5607, rrondash@ci.pleasanton.ca.us